

{Read Passage / Opening Prayer}

i. Hear some of these verses once again...

1 . . . Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. 3 “Let the day perish on which I was to be born, And the night which said, ‘A boy is conceived.’ 4 “May that day be darkness; Let not God above care for it, Nor light shine on it. 7 “Behold, let that night be barren; Let no joyful shout enter it. 11 “Why did I not die at birth, Come forth from the womb and expire? 20 “Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul, 23 “Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, And whom God has hedged in? 25 “For what I fear comes upon me, And what I dread befalls me. 26 “I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes.”

Here’s a man in anguish of soul.

His soul has been eclipsed by suffering.

ii. Remember Job’s wife in chapter 2:9?

In t/midst of their suffering she says to him ==>

9 “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!”

It’s what Satan predicted in 1:11 & 2:5 — should Job suffer great loss he would do just that: he would curse God.

Quite t/opposite. His response was worship (1:20); a profession of faith in a good, sovereign G. (1:21)

21 He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

iii. Job doesn’t curse God

But he does, as we see here in chapt. 3, curse t/day he was born (Heb. lit. “he cursed his day”)

1 . . . Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

3 “Let the day perish on which I was to be born . . .

iv. This is chapter 3 . . .

A chapt. that has been called “one of the darkest of the entire Bible.”

Robert Alden writes:

“The third chapter of Job must be one of the most depressing chapters in the Bible. While some might be as depressed as Job was and use these verses to give vent to their feelings, few sermons are made from this chapter, few verses are claimed as promises, and few are remembered for the warmth of their sentiment. It is the lowest of several low points in the book.” [cited in Swindoll, 61-62]

v. Job chapter 3 is what we might call “raw reality”

It’s a dark contrast to Job’s response of worship in t/face of suffering that we saw earlier. Job’s complaint in chapt 3 seem inconsistent w/his words in 2:10 where he asks his suffering wife {cite}

vi. Job chapter three is also a lament

That's an old-fashioned word, isn't it: lament?

We are more familiar w/the word "complaint." While lament is a complaint, it's more that a "mere complaint" (as in "complaining").

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

We're not to be complainers // grumblers . . . I picture here ppl. who complain about their jobs / kids / CH / spouse / weather (malcontents)

vii. I'm going to suggest to you that there is a type of complaint, specifically a lament, that is very Christian

Biblical lament is a complaint of faith that moves one from despair to hope. Being real w/G. Expressing your pain, frustrations, hopes.

As 1 author puts it, "Lament stands in the gap between pain and promise." [Mark Vroegop, Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy, 26]

We have an entire book of godly complaint: Lamentations.

T/Psalms are filled with Laments (category of Lament Psalms):

Psalm 10:1 Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?

Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

Psalm 42:9 I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

Psalm 44:23 Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever.

Psalm 74:1 O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?

Psalm 88:14 O LORD, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?

viii. One common feature of lament is t/word “why?”

We see it here in Job:

11 “Why did I not die at birth, Come forth from the womb and expire? 20 “Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul, 23 “Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, And whom God has hedged in?”

It takes an act of faith to lament. Lament is brutal and honest.

“It is better to ask them [hard questions of God] than not to ask them, because asking them sharpens the issue and pushes us toward the right, positive response.” [James M. Boice]

Alexander Maclaren: “Doubts are better put into plain speech than lying diffused and darkening, like poisonous mists in the heart. A thought, be it good or bad, can be dealt with when it is made articulate.”

During one of my dark days when I was feeling guilty for my complaint about t/tragedy that struck our family, a friend wisely reminded me that G. has big shoulders. He knows what I’m feeling & doesn’t shy away from my honest complaints.

x. How I Dislike “Sanitized Christianity”

So-called Xn obligation to act like we’re happy even when we’re miserable. Fake-smiles painted on suffering faces.

We see it in our contemporary music. Sappy, marshmallow fluff choruses about how happy we are and how all our problems disappear w/a single glimpse of t/One who calms life’s storms!

I’m sorry. I’m often not happy. Sometimes I’m quite miserable.
I refuse to walk around w/a fake smile on my face.

Christopher Ash, in his excellent commentary on this chapter, writes: “There is a version of Christianity around that is shallow, trite, superficial, ‘happy clappy’ (as some put it). It is a kind of Christianity that, as has been said ‘would have had Jesus singing a chorus at the grave of Lazarus.’ We have all met it—easy triumphalism. We sing of God in one song that, ‘In his presence our problems disappear.’ In another that ‘my love just keeps on growing.’ Neither was true for Job in chapter 3, and yet he was a real and blameless believer.” [68]

Is there joy? Yes.

But joy can be elusive & it isn’t immune from sorrow.

It’s okay to sing in t/minor key. That’s where we often live our lives.

We are real people who not only rejoice; we also weep.

T/CH ought to be a place where you feel safe when your life hurts.

To lament is to express real pain // honest before G. // act of faith // acknowledges G's sov. role in suffering // In pursuit of truth & righte.

With those things in mind you can see the distinction between complaints that are God-honoring and those that are not.

xi. As we come to Job chapter 3 we move from prose to poetry

Prose is narrative & Job chapters 1-2 have been that, historical narrative. Now we move into Heb. poetry, a form of writing that dominates the rest of t/book. (Why Job is considered a poetic work).

This dialogue by Job is a soliloquy. That means he's basically talking to himself. I think he's still sitting in t/town dump (chapt. 2) // his friends are still there. But he's speaking to himself. Asking hard ?s.

He's w/3 friends; he's in t/company of his God—yet he feels so alone.

xii. I call this the loneliness of lament, or the loneliness of sorrow

I have found that the most lonely time of my life came following t/death of our daughter. I could be a in room full of people and feel as if I was t/only one there.

The Solitude of Sorrow

Written by Tony A. Bartolucci on July 5, 2016

Why is it so
That a singular delight
Can be shared by others?
They experience the same feeling;
The same happiness.

But the sorrows and agonies I face,
Ring within the lonely hollows of my soul.

The grief, the tears, the fears
Imprisoned within the walls of that
Which is uniquely me;

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Those walls resound with my appeal:  
'Do you know what I feel?'  
The echo fades and all is still,  
For no one else is there.

Is that true? No.  
But it feels true when you find yourself sucked into darkness.

You know G. is there; yet you feel abandoned.

C.S. Lewis touched on this while suffering from the loss of his wife. In his book, *A Grief Observed*, he writes:  
“This is one of the most disquieting symptoms [of loss]. When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing [God]. . . . If you remember yourself and turn to Him with gratitude and praise, you will be—or so it feels—welcomed with open arms. But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face and the sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed so once.”

Psalm 10:1 Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?

Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

This is where Job finds himself . . .

Thomas Wolfe, in *The Anatomy of Loneliness*:

“The most tragic, sublime, and beautiful expression of loneliness which I have ever read is the Book of Job.”

For t/sake of our outline we can frame this passage around 3 ?s ==>

***I. WHY Was I Born? (1-10)***

***II. WHY Did I Live (11-19)***

***III. WHY Am I Alive Now (20-26)***

**I. WHY Was I Born? (1-10)**

**A. Note the First Word of Verse 1:**

1 **Afterward . . . .**

**1. After what? Go back to context**

All that we’ve seen so far in chapters 1 & 2

Job, described as a righteous, prosperous man is struck by tragedy.

Job who loses his wealth and all 10 of his children in a single day. As

if that’s not enough, Satan is also permitted to afflict him physically with painful skin lesions that cover his entire body.

The greatest of the men of the East is now dwells in the town dump, scraping his oozing sores w/broken pieces of pottery.

Hearing of his calamity, 3 friends schedule a visit & when they see Job at a distance they hardly recognize him. In an act of mourning t/3 friends join Job in his tears as they rend their garments & toss dust into the air. They sit with Job in silence for 7 days.

The last words of chapter 2: “his pain was very great.”

**a. It’s “after this” that the silence is broken by Job himself**

***I. WHY Was I Born? (1-10)***

**1 Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.**

**2 And Job said,**

**3 “Let the day perish on which I was to be born, And the night which said, ‘A boy [literally “a man”] is conceived.’**

**B. We see “day” and “night” here [^]**

Job not only curses t/day of his birth, he also curses t/night of his conception!

**4 “May that day [day of his birth] be darkness; Let not God above care for it, Nor light shine on it.**

**5 “Let darkness and black gloom claim it; Let a cloud settle on it; Let the blackness of the day terrify it.**

6 **“As for that night, [night he was conceived, v. 3] let darkness seize it; Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; Let it not come into the number of the months.**

7 **“Behold, let that night be barren; Let no joyful shout enter it.**

No “joyful shout” of conception. Just barrenness - that which was considered a curse in t/OT Job would see as a blessing.

### **C. This is Genesis 1 in reverse!**

Gen. 1:2-3 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Job was conceived. It was dark. God knit him together in his mother’s womb. Job was born and his eyes saw light for t/first time.

Now Job wishes that were reversed! A creation that never happened, a life that never progressed beyond its 1st moments.

8 **“Let those curse it who curse the day, Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.**

### **D. Leviathan**

May be a reference to ANE mythical creature that stood for destruction (to rouse him was to bring forth ruin).

If that's the case, this doesn't mean that Job believed in mythology, just that he was referring to a familiar figure (we do that when, for example, we say someone has the strength of Atlas). Or it may refer to a sea creature of some kind (chapter 41). But the point remains.

One writer comments ==>

“[Job wants to] stir up from the depths this chaotic, evil, supernatural sea monster whose design is always to bring disorder in place of order, death in place of life, darkness swallowing life. It is rather like in The Lord of the Rings, when those making up the Fellowship of the Ring are passing through the mines of Moria, and one of the hobbits accidentally stirs up the monstrous Balrog, with terrible consequences.” [Ash, 73]

This darkness theme continues in v. 9 ==>

**9 “Let the stars of its twilight be darkened; Let it wait for light but have none, And let it not see the breaking dawn;**

Reason ==>

**10 Because it did not shut the opening of my mother's womb, Or hide trouble from my eyes.**

**E. Once our eyes are open to the fallen world around us, we face a life of distress**

Job 5:7 For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.

### **1. Isn't that true?**

From the time we enter life we are faced with a world of sin and suffering.

### **a. Eternal Perspective**

"Don't doubt for a moment that circumstances of suffering are used of God to shape you and conform you into the image of His Son. Nothing enters your life accidentally—remember that. There is no such thing as 'luck' or 'coincidence' or 'fate' to the child of God. Behind our every experience is our loving sovereign Lord. He is continually working things out according to His infinite plan and purpose. And that includes our suffering. When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible individual . . . and crushes him. Being crushed means being reshaped—to be a vital, compassionate, useful instrument in His hands." [C. Swindoll, For Those Who Hurt]

### **a. The Cross**

Job moves from ==>

#### **I. WHY Was I Born? (1-10)**

To ==>

#### **II. WHY Did I Live (11-19)**

#### **A. Much the same Theme**

2 more questions:

11 **“Why did I not die at birth, Come forth from the womb and expire?”**

Why didn't I just die at birth... Note the progression.

12a **“Why did the knees receive me . . .**

May refer to the posture that a child would take on his mother's knees before feeding for the first time. Or may refer to the patriarchal process of a father being given the infant shortly after birth. The child would be placed on his knees who would then bless the child.

12b . . . **And why the breasts, that I should suck?**

**B. "Why?"**

**1. It's a word children ask all the time**

I once knew a young boy whom we used to joke about. His response to most anything you said was 1 word: "Why?"

**2. We grow up to ask that same question when tragedy strikes**

On February 15, 1947, an Avianca Airlines Douglas DC-4 crashed into Mount El Tablazo en route from Barranquilla to Bogotá, Colombia, killing all 53 people on board.

Mount El Tablazo was shrouded in fog when, at 12:18 local time, the aircraft crashed into it at an elevation of about 10,500 feet.

The DC-4 disintegrated with a metallic scream. flamed crazily down the mountainside into a deep ravine.

What was left of the one awful moment illuminated a cold Colombian mountain in the night, then the darkness returned. And the silence.

Before leaving the airport earlier that day, a young New Yorker named Glenn Chambers hurriedly scribbled a note on a piece of paper he found on the floor of the terminal. The scrap was part of a printed advertisement with the single word, "Why?" sprawled across the center.

Needing stationery in a hurry, Chambers scrawled a note to his mother around the word in the middle. Quickly folding this last-minute thought, he stuffed it in an envelope and dropped it in a box. There would be more to come, or course. More about the budding of a lifelong dream to begin a ministry with the "Voice of the Andes" in Ecuador.

But there was no more to come. Between the mailing and the delivery of Chambers' note, El Tablazo snagged his flight and his dreams from the night sky. The envelope arrived later than the news of his death. When his mother received it, the question burned up at her from the page--"Why?"

It is the question that hits first and lingers longest. Why? Why me? Why now? Why this? [Charles Swindoll, cited in *Biblical Preaching*, 162]

### **C. Verses 13-19**

**13 For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest**

**14 with kings and rulers of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins,**

**15 with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver.**

## **1. Another “why?”**

**16 Or why was I not hidden away in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day?**

**17 There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest.**

**18 Captives also enjoy their ease; they no longer hear the slave driver’s shout.**

**19 The small and the great are there, and the slaves are freed from their owners.**

## **2. Death: the great equalizer**

You come with nothing, you leave w/nothing.

True of t/great and the small. It’s true of captives who “no longer hear the shouts of the slave driver” as well as “kings and the rulers of the earth” (v. 14).

### **a. You wonder — Is Job thinking logically?**

Yeah death is the great equalizer as far as earthly life is concerned.

You can be an arrogant multi-million dollar Hollywood celebrity.

You can be a skid row bum.

You die the same.

### **(1) But what about eternity? What of eternal life?**

That wasn’t something that was as much at the forefront of t/OT believer’s thinking like it is of the N.T. believer.

But it’s certainly not Job’s focus here.

What we have is t/loneliness of Lament; a sufferer asking t/question:

## **II. WHY Did I Live (11-19)**

Jeremiah 20:14–18 14 Cursed be the day when I was born; Let the day not be blessed when my mother bore me! 15 Cursed be the man who brought the news To my father, saying, “A baby boy has been born to you!” And made him very happy. 16 But let that man be like the cities Which the LORD overthrew without relenting, And let him hear an outcry in the morning And a shout of alarm at noon; 17 Because he did not kill me before birth, So that my mother would have been my grave, And her womb ever pregnant. 18 Why did I ever come forth from the womb To look on trouble and sorrow, So that my days have been spent in shame?

## **III. WHY Am I Alive Now (20-26)**

### **A. Listen to the Words . . .**

20 **“Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul,**

21 **Who long for death, but there is none, And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,**

22 **Who rejoice greatly, And exult when they find the grave?**

#### **1. Why am allowed to live?**

I long for death, but it doesn't come.

### **B. Verse 23 so resonates with me**

3 **“Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, And whom God has hedged in?**

## **1. “hedged in”**

“No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear.” [C.S. Lewis]

How many times I have felt like I was literally trapped in my own skin. Like I was being crushed by an invisible force. I wanted to run to escape? What? Sometimes I didn’t even know.

### **a. Ironic twist here . . .**

1:10 “Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

**23 “Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, And whom God has hedged in?”**

### **C. Verse 24**

**24 “For my groaning comes at the sight of my food, And my cries pour out like water.**

### **D. Verses 25**

**25 “For what I fear comes upon me, And what I dread befalls me.**

**1. This is almost (as one writer describes it) a “what next” paranoia**

### **a. NIV**

**25 What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.**

Within all of us is that thought, “What if this happened to me?”

We've had ppl. say that to us in light of our tragedy, "*It makes me think, what if that were me?*"

Did Job, while things were good, have this thought, "These blessings, this material prosperity, these children could be taken from me?"

Wisdom lives with an eye toward the temporal nature of all we have on this earth. I can be gone in an instant.

**E. The last verse of the chapter**

**26 "I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes."**

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A dark chapter! It was a dark chapter in Job's life.

I think of another lament - Jesus lament from the Cross citing Psalm 22:1 - My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

The Loneliness of Sorrow . . .

Forsaken that we may be forgiven. His darkness became our light.  
We must remember that t/light of t/Cross has t/power to pierce thru t/darkest of our days.